



POLICE ASSOCIATION OF NEW SOUTH WALES

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Smoke and Mirrors: Drug Drivers still free to drive high

The Police Association of NSW supports the National Roads & Motorists' Association, (NRMA) calls for the punishment of drug driving to reflect the dangers to all road users and the wider community.

New data has shown that the trend of people driving with the presence of illicit drugs and escaping penalty has continued upwards.

The penalties for motorists caught with the active presence of cannabis, speed and ice and ecstasy in their system include a \$1,100 fine and a minimum three month disqualification for a first time offence. Heavier penalties apply for a second offence.

Almost one-in-three (488 drivers) convicted of drug driving in NSW from 2010 to 2012 walked free after receiving a Section 10, were convicted without penalty, or had no conviction recorded. This is an increase from 27 per cent when the NRMA last obtained the data from the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research.

Police Association President, Scott Weber, said, "Drug drivers are getting off penalty-free, it's not good enough that one-in-three drivers when they front court get let off to drive again while drug impaired. They are unsafe and all road users are put at risk.

"Driving while under the influence of drugs seriously affects your ability to drive safely and is just as dangerous as drink driving.

"Police are doing their job, and using technology to undertake about 32,000 roadside drug tests, which catch one-in-50 motorists and one-in-86 heavy vehicle drivers with illicit drugs in their system.

"But no amount of testing or technology, will impact on this problem and change behaviour, until the courts ensure that the law reflects the seriousness of this offence - If you take illicit drugs and get behind the wheel you're at a far greater risk of killing yourself or someone else.

"Police support more education around drug driving, especially for younger drivers under the age of 30. Forty per cent of drug driving offences and fatal crashes involved a driver under 30.

"However education and tougher penalties won't save lives unless enforced by the courts. The dangerous act of drug driving won't stop if the courts won't ensure the punishment fits the crime."

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PRESS RELEASE